

Brief Glances at the Themes of Each Surah

شرح خلاصة النظر في مقاصد السور

By Dr. Muhammad al-Rabee'ah

Translated by Khalil Klopfenstein

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Introduction

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of all creation. May He send His salah and salam on His Prophet, Muhammad, and on his family and companions. To proceed:

Allah invites us to contemplate His Book, saying:

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ

This is a Book which We have sent down to you full of blessings that they may contemplate its ayaat [38:29]

In one of his writings, the great scholar ibn al-Qayyim wrote, “If people only knew the great value of reciting the Qur’an with contemplation, they would devote themselves to it above anything else.”¹

Dr. Musa'id al-Tayyar described one of the fruits of such contemplation by writing, “To some careful observers, it may become clear that the surahs containing a number of different topics have a delicate interweaving which links the topics into

¹ *Miftah Dar al-Sa'adah* 1/187

a cohesive whole. This is what some contemporary scholars refer to as a “unified through-line”.

“And it is possible to identify this “unified through-line” or what some scholars refer to as the “theme of the surah” by considering the following factors:

- 1) The surah’s name
- 2) The surah’s topics
- 3) The surah’s context
- 4) The surah’s explanation

This is a field that deserves great attention, and the contemporary books in this vein are gradually increasing.”²

One such contemporary work is the book you see in front of you. This is a translation of Dr. Muhammad al-Rabee’ah’s brief notes on the themes of each surah of the Qur’an, originally found in the booklet *Sharh Khulasah al-Nathar fi Maqasid al-Suwar*. Dr. Muhammad al-Rabee’ah is a professor at the University of al-Qassim who frequently writes and lectures on *tadabbur* – reflecting over the Qur’an.

As Dr. Muhammad al-Rabee’ah wrote in his introduction to that work, “Any speech of worth has a central theme which it revolves around and a purpose driving it. The speech most deserving of this quality is Allah’s perfect Speech in His clear Book. Allah has made His Speech into surahs which vary in their length and number of ayaat. Every one of these surahs

² *al-Muharrar fi ‘Uloom al-Qur’an* pg. 209-210, with minor abridgement

has a theme which all of its ayaat connect back to, which is one facet of the Qur'an's perfection.

“Al-Biqā'i said, 'Whoever recognizes the theme of a surah will understand how all of its ayaat, stories, and passages connect to one another.'”³⁴

We hope that the brief glances at the themes of each surah provided in this book will aid you in greater contemplation of the Qur'an. We leave you with the following quote from ibn Mas'ood, “Recite the Qur'an, let it move your heart, and do not make your main concern merely reaching the end of the surah.”⁵

May Allah make the Qur'an the spring of our hearts and the light of our chests. We ask Allah to accept this effort and to make it a source of benefit for the author, the translator, and the readers.

Khalil Klopfenstein

Sha'ban 27, 1445

Corresponding to March 8, 2024

³ *Masa'id al-Nathar* pg. 149

⁴ *Sharh Khulasah al-Nathar* pg. 5

⁵ Reported by al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Eeman* 3/407

Surah al-Fatihah (1)

This surah is centered around actualizing servitude and directing oneself towards Allah alone. This theme is presented while also defining who is Allah: the One who deserves our worship, the One who guides us to traverse on the straight path, and the One who prohibits us from following any path of those who oppose His path. And there is an exquisite ayah,

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

**You alone do we worship, and
You alone we ask for help. [1:5]**

which explicitly expresses this theme.

This surah has been mandated in our prayers because it involves directing ourselves to Allah and renewing our commitment to worship Him alone. That is why it is the greatest surah in the Qur'an.

In this vein, it has also been named "The Source of the Qur'an", "The Source of the Scripture", "Comprehensive", "Sufficient", and "The Foundation".

Surah al-Baqarah (2)

This surah revolves around the theme of responding to Allah's commands with submission and compliance, which is the crux that being granted authority over the earth revolves around, and this surah provides us with several examples of this – both of those granted this authority and those deprived of it. For Adam and Ibrahim were granted it, while the Children of Israa'eel were deprived.

And this surah points towards the ascendancy of this Ummah who responded to Allah's commands. This comes in what Allah mentioned when speaking about the Qiblah,

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

And thus We have made you a balanced nation so that you would be witnesses over mankind. [2:143]

The fact that this surah is named “al-Baqarah” – “the Cow” – is a reference to the way in which the nation whose position has been inherited – i.e. the Children of Israa'eel – responded to Allah's commands, serving as a warning to this Islamic nation.

Along those lines, the surah concludes with Allah affirming the condition of this nation by saying,

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ
بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ ۚ وَقَالُوا
سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا

The Messenger believes in what was sent down to him from his Lord, as do the believers. All of them believe in Allah, His angels, His scriptures, and His messengers. We make no distinction between any of the messengers. They say, “we hear and we obey.” [2:285]

The contents of this surah also affirm the core fundamentals of the religion and overarching principles of the sharee’ah. This was mentioned by sheikh al-Islam ibn Taymiyah, and the surah thus also gives attention to the five essentials of life.

Surah Aal 'Imran (3)

The theme of this surah is demonstrating that Islam is the truth, thus requiring the Ahl al-Kitab to recognize this, while also affirming those who already believe in it.

It is called Aal 'Imran because its first section is related to the visit of Christians of Najran who claimed that their religion is the truth. In light of that, the surah begins with tawheed in opposition to the creed of the Christians, and that tawheed is the greatest means of steadfastness. And there are a number of ayaat within this surah that clearly state this theme, such as,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

The religion according to Allah is Islam [3:19]

and

وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ

Whoever desires something other than Islam ... [3:85]

And regarding the theme of steadfastness, there is Allah's statement,

رَبَّنَا لَا تُرِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا

**Our Lord, do not allow cause our hearts to deviate after
you have guided us [3:8]**

and

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ
مُسْلِمُونَ

**O you who have believed, fear Allah as He deserves to be
feared and do not die unless you are Muslims [3:102]**

And the surah concludes with,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ

**O you who have believed, have patience and be steadfast
and stand alert and fear Allah so that you may be
successful [3:200]**



Surah al-Nisa' (4)

This surah is centered around Allah's protection of the Muslim society in terms of their rights and the relationships between people. All of this is done to remove the remnants of pre-Islamic ignorance and the deviations of the Ahl al-Kitab and munafiqoon, and to emphasize the importance of following the Messenger and judging by the sharee'ah, as well as cautioning against those who oppose it and their misguidance.

This surah is named "al-Nisa'" – "the Women" – to emphasize the rights of the oppressed ones whose rights were infringed by the Pre-Islamic Arabs and by the Ahl al-Kitab. That is why the surah both opens and closes with this theme.

Surah al-Ma'idah (5)

This surah revolves around fulfilling one's covenants and complying with the religious rulings and legal guidelines after the religion has been completed and perfected. This theme is emphasized by the fact that the surah is also known as "surah al-'Uqood" – "the surah of pacts". This surah also contains Allah's statement,

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ

Today I have completed your religion for you [5:3]

In addition, it is one of the last parts of the Qur'an to be revealed, and it is a completion of surah al-Baqarah which centered around confirming the foundations of the religion and laying down the overarching principles.

Surah al-An'aam (6)

This surah revolves around affirming the belief in tawheed and abolishing the belief in shirk. This theme is developed through arguments against the mushrikoon based on evidence.

This surah also centers around tearing down their shirk-based beliefs which go against tawheed, one of which is their shirk in relation to “al-an’aam” – “cattle”. That is why this surah begins with tawheed and ends with tawheed. It begins with,

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ
وَالنُّورَ

All praise is due to Allah who created the heavens and the earth and made the darknesses and the light [6:1]

and it ends with,

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَانِي رَبِّي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيَمًا مِّلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي * حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۚ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ * وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Say: my Lord has guided me to the straight path, an upright religion, the monotheists way of Ibrahim, and he was not one of the mushrikoon. * Say: My prayer and my

rituals and my living and my death are for Allah, Lord of all creation. * There is no partner for Him. That is what I have been commanded, and I am the first of those who submit [6:161-163]

until the end.

Surah al-A'raaf (7)

This surah is centered around the victory of truth over falsehood and the bad outcomes that the prideful ones face in both this life and the next. These themes serve as both a consolation to the Prophet and as a warning to the mushrikoon. The surah presents events from the lives of the Prophets, the proofs that they established against their peoples, and their successes in both this life and the next. These stories begin with the story of Adam and Iblis, which was the beginning of the struggle between truth and falsehood.

The title of “al-A'raaf” – “the Heights” – points to the idea of the clarity and recognition of the truth through clear proofs, which is what the Prophets brought. In this life the Prophets established proofs against their peoples, and in the hereafter they will bear witness against them. In this life the following phrase of the Prophets was repeated,

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي

I convey the messages of my Lord to you [7:62]

لَقَدْ أُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَةَ رَبِّي

**I have certainly conveyed the message of my Lord to
you [7:79]**

لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي

I have certainly conveyed the messages of my Lord to you [7:93]

And in the hereafter, Allah said of them,

وَنَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

And the people of the Heights will call to men [in the hellfire] by their marks, saying, ‘What benefit were your great numbers and your arrogant ways? [7:48].

This indicates that the people of the Heights are the Prophets, according to the opinion most in-keeping with the surrounding context.

That is further supported by Allah’s statement,

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ
الْأَشْهَادُ

We will surely give victory to Our Messengers and those who believe in this worldly life and on the day that the witnesses will stand [40:51]

and the witnesses here are the angels and Prophets, as some of the salaf said. And ibn ‘Aashoor said, “The Prophets bearing witness against those who disbelieved in them is part of their victory over them.”

Surah al-Anfal (8)

This surah revolves around showing how Allah has blessed the believers by supporting them, and clearly showing the ways that lead to victory and the ways that lead to humiliation.

All of this comes in the midst of Allah's nurturing guidance to the believers in the aftermath of the Battle of Badr, making this story like a summary of the lessons learned from their first military encounter. That is why the surah begins by mentioning the "anfal" – the spoils of war – and the Sahabah's disagreement about it.

So the first 40 ayaat of the surah focus on cultivating and refining the believers before the ruling of the spoils of war finally comes at ayah 41 with Allah's statement,

وَاَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِّن شَيْءٍ

**And be informed that any part of the war booty that
you obtain ... [8:41]**



Surah al-Tawbah (9)

This surah is centered around the Islamic stance towards the mushrikoon and munafiqoon while encouraging them to repent alongside the believers. And all of this is coming after Islam had gained power and prestige.

That is why this surah is called “al-Baraa’ah” – “Disavowal” – and “al-Fadhihah” – “The Scandal” – and “al-Tawbah” – “Repentance” – and why the word “al-tawbah” is repeated 17 times in it.

And this emphasis on repentance is given further importance by the fact that this was one of the last surahs to be revealed.



Surah Yunus (10)

This surah is centered around affirming the matters of divine revelation and prophethood through evidences while also calling those who deny them to come to Islam through both encouragement and intimidation. That is why this surah both begins and ends by mentioning divine revelation and contains numerous arguments and evidences for Allah's right to be worshipped.

This surah also includes the story of Yunus and how his people believed in him after being threatened with divine punishment. This was directed to the Quraysh as an encouragement to believe, as well as a threat of divine punishment.

Surah Hud (11)

This surah is centered around supporting the Prophet to be steadfast in inviting to Islam, and being harsh towards those rejecters who would harm him.

This surah includes an affirmation of the messengers in the face of the extreme obstinacy of their people, which comes very clearly in the story of Hud, after whom this surah is named.

This surah also contains the story of Nuh calling his son to believe and his son's persistence and death upon disbelief. This story is a consolation to the Prophet for his efforts to call his uncle Abu Taalib and his uncle's death upon disbelief.

This confirms the fact that this surah was revealed after Abu Taalib's death at a time when the disbelievers' rejection and harm of the Prophet had reached new heights after the death of his uncle.

And perhaps all of this is linked to the Prophet's statement, "**Hud and its sister-surahs have caused my hairs to turn white**" which al-Albani graded as "saheeh" in his checking of Mishkat al-Masabih #3825. That hadith is in reference to Allah's strong command,

فَاسْتَقِمَّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ

So be upright as you have been commanded [11:112]

as well as the strong warnings and threats that this surah presents to his people. This surah, along with its sister-surahs, contains strong threats to the Prophet's people of punishment in both this life and the next. So that is what turned his hairs white and have trouble sleeping out of fear of those things – and Allah knows best.

Surah Yusuf (12)

This surah is centered around affirming the Prophet with promises of future empowerment after a difficult test. This comes in the midst of Allah highlighting His care for Yusuf and Ya'qub and the careful management of their affairs, as well as their amazing steadfast patience which eventually led to their empowerment. That is why Yusuf said at the end of the surah,

إِنَّ رَبِّي لَطِيفٌ لِّمَا يَشَاءُ

Indeed, my Lord is kind to whomever He wishes [12:100]

And in the end of the surah Allah says,

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا اسْتَيْأَسَ الرُّسُلُ وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ كُذِّبُوا جَاءَهُمْ نَصْرُنَا

until, when the messengers gave up hope and thought that they would be rejected, then Our aid came to them [12:110]

This surah was revealed at a time when the Prophet's people were severely harming him after the death of his uncle. That is why it likens his story to the story of Yusuf in terms of the plot of Yusuf's brothers against him and the trials that resulted from it. That is why Allah says at the end,

وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ أَجْمَعُوا أَمْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَمْكُرُونَ

And you were not present with them when they arranged their plan and plotted [12:102]



Surah al-Ra'd (13)

This surah revolves around demonstrating Allah's greatness and power, as well as His signs which strike fear into the disbelievers, one of which being "al-Rad" – "thunder". Through the thunder, we see the amazing nature of Allah's creation, as well as His precise control over it.

This surah also affirms the truth that Allah has revealed, as well as His promises to His allies and His threats to His enemies.

Furthermore, this surah also shows Allah's consistent way of changing people's conditions and replacing one thing with another.

Surah Ibrahim (14)

A central theme of this surah is affirming the Prophets' fulfilment of their mission to convey Allah's message, while also threatening punishment for those who reject it. That is why the surah repeatedly mentions the messengers and the people being brought out of darkness into the light.

This surah includes the story of Ibrahim and his call to al-tawheed, as well as his calling his sons to avoid idols and to instead practice the true religion and establish the prayer. This served as an argument against the people of Mecca and other mushrikoon and as a warning of punishment in the hereafter.

And the surah concludes with Allah's statement,

هَذَا بَلَاغٌ لِلنَّاسِ

This is a message for the people ... [14:52]

further emphasizing that this proof has been conveyed to the people through the preaching of the messengers.

Surah al-Hijr (15)

This surah is centered around the threat of punishment for those who pridefully reject and mock the Qur'an. This is done in defense of the Qur'an and to support the Prophet whom Allah blessed with the Qur'an and bolster him in his mission to use the Qur'an to warn the people. That is why the surah concludes with Allah's statement,

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ

And We have given you the seven oft-repeated and the great Qur'an [15:87]

until His statement,

فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ * إِنَّا كَفَيْنَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ

So openly proclaim what you have been commanded and turn away from the mushrikoon * Truly, We will suffice you against the mockers [15:94-95]

This surah also presents threats for the rejecters by reminding them of how the prideful ones were destroyed. It also includes the story of Adam and Iblees, pointing to the archetype of the first instance of prideful rejection of truth, then moving on to present examples of others prideful ones from across various nations.

Surah al-Nahl (16)

The theme of this surah is that reminders of one's blessings should prompt a person to remember the One who sent those blessings. This theme is communicated by listing the many blessings and beneficial things, all of which require one to worship and be grateful to the Creator who granted all these blessings and also serve as a warning against being ungrateful for His blessings and signs.

There are reports from a number of the salaf of this surah also being named "surah al-Na'm" – "the surah of blessings" – and the word "blessings" is repeated throughout it.

The surah concludes by mentioning the disbelievers' typical attitude towards blessings, as comes in Allah's statement,

**وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا قَرْيَةً كَانَتْ آمِنَةً مُطْمَئِنَّةً يَأْتِيهَا رِزْقُهَا رَغَدًا
مِّن كُلِّ مَكَانٍ فَكَفَرَتْ بِأَنْعُمِ اللَّهِ**

Allah puts forward the example of a town that was safe and content, provisions coming to it from every place, but it was ungrateful for Allah's blessings ... [16:112]

as well as the exemplary model of gratitude, Ibrahim, on the other hand, who was

شَاكِرًا لِأَنْعُمِهِ

grateful for Our blessings [16:121]

Surah al-Israa' (17)

This surah is centered around the high status of the Prophet, the completeness of his message, and his good end. All of this serves to affirm and support him, while also threatening those who reject him, after mentioning the story of the Prophet's Night Journey and how the people rejected it. The Night Journey alludes to and provides glad tidings of the far-reach of his message both at that time and in the future and a good end result in both this life and the next.

This is further emphasized by the fact that this surah was revealed during a period of great difficulty when the disbelievers were forming a plot against the Prophet following the Night Journey and Ascension.

Regarding the high status of the Prophet, Allah said,

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا

Exalted is He who took His servant on a night journey [17:1]

عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا

Perhaps your Lord will raise you to a praiseworthy station [17:79]

And regarding the completeness of his message, Allah said,

إِنَّ هَٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَفْوَٰمٌ

This Qur'an certainly guides to that which is best [17:9]



Surah al-Kahf (18)

This surah revolves around how to deal with trials, as is presented through the different circumstances of the righteous people and their ways of dealing with different types of trials.

These trials include: religious difficulties, monetary difficulties, trials that come with knowledge, trials that come with having authority.

These stories also demonstrate excellent upright behavior and highlight the different stages of calling others to Islam, moving from the weak condition of the People of the Cave to the strong position of Dhu'l-Qarnayn.

For these reasons, this surah is one of the “early treasures” which served to affirm and console the Prophet.



Surah Maryam (19)

This surah is centered around demonstrating the completeness of Allah's mercy towards the creation and their need of Him, as well as His freedom from any defects or any need of them, especially any need of a son or wife. The surah also highlights Allah's care for those who single Him out in worship and His criticism of those who worship others alongside Him.

Allah mentioned the word "al-rahmah" – "mercy/kindness" – and its derivatives more than ten times in this surah.

This surah Allah presents of the ways of the previous prophets and the absolute servitude and humility that they had towards Allah. This is in contrast to the ways of mushrikoon, their evils behaviors and their bad ends.

At the beginning of this surah, Allah mentions His power to create a child through unlikely means or no means at all, and at the end of the surah there is a clear disavowal of Him having any child. And in line with this, the story of Maryam and the birth of 'Eesaa is placed in between those two, as is the supplication of Ibrahim – the monotheist son – for his polytheist father.

Surah Taha (20)

This surah is dedicated to showing that the Qur'an is the cause of everlasting joy for those who follow its guidance and everlasting sorrow for those who oppose it, and this message serves to affirm the Prophet and warn those who reject him.

This surah also mentions Allah's special care towards Moosaa and how he faced the difficulties from his people, which serves to alert the Prophet to Allah's support and to steady him.

Surah al-Anbiya' (21)

This surah acts as a reminder of the stories of the messengers, their unified message, and their worship and supplications directed solely to Allah.

The word "al-'Ibadah" – "worship" – and its derivatives are repeated frequently throughout this surah, as is the word "al-dhikr" – "remembrance" – as this surah is a reminder of the lives of these messengers and their call, which is also a way of fortifying the Prophet and criticizing those who rejected him.

Surah al-Hajj (22)

This surah centers around magnifying Allah and His symbols and submitting to Him. This theme starts from the opening of the surah which mentions incredible scenes, Allah's amazing power as seen through His signs, and the terrifying sights of the hereafter.

This surah is called "al-Hajj" and it discusses the Hajj pilgrimage and its legal rulings even though it is a Makki surah. As a result, the surah reflects the themes of tawheed, magnification and submission found in the Hajj pilgrimage. That is why the term "magnification" is repeated throughout the surah,

وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ حُرُمَاتِ اللَّهِ

And whoever magnifies what Allah has sanctified
[22:30]

and

وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ حُرُمَاتِ اللَّهِ

And whoever magnifies the symbols of Allah [22:32]

This surah also contains a number of ayaat ending with Allah's Names which prompts one to magnify Him and submit oneself.

Likewise, this surah also contains two prostrations which prompts one to revere Allah, submit oneself and humble oneself before Allah.

And this surah also contains a closing call which instructs a person to magnify Allah and to humble and submit himself to Him,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا
الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

**O you who believe, bow, prostrate, and worship your
Lord, and do good so that you might be successful**
[22:77]

and

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ

**Hold fast to Allah, He is your Master. What a wonderful
master He is and what a wonderful support** [22:78]

Surah al-Mu'minoon (23)

This surah revolves around commending the believers and criticizing the disbelievers. In this vein, the surah begins with,

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

The believers are certainly successful [23:1]

and ends with:

إِنَّهُ لَا يَفْلَحُ الْكَافِرُونَ

The disbelievers will certainly not succeed [23:117]

This surah includes descriptions of the believers in three separate places, for the topic of eeman is at the heart of this surah, running through the praise of their believers, descriptions of them and their rewards, and the criticism of the disbelievers and their stance against eeman and its people, as well as mentioning their final end state.



Surah al-Noor (24)

This surah is centered around chastity, guarding one's honor, and protecting the purity of Muslim society by enacting measures to prevent the causes behind sexual immorality, to repel the munafiqoon's plots to spread it, and to dignify the believers with maintaining chastity and spiritual purity as a result of divine guidance.

All of this is a fulfillment of Allah's promise to aid and empower the believers while protecting the purity of the Muslim community.

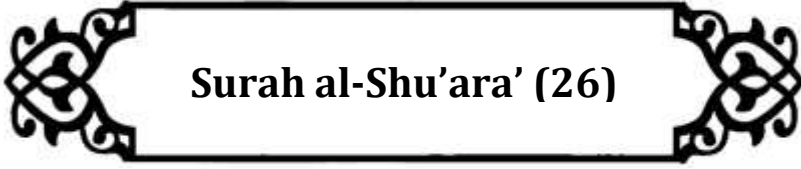
This surah is called "al-Noor" – "the light" – because it acts as a guiding light for the believers for how to behave and how to avoid the darkneses of sexual immorality and forbidden lusts.



Surah al-Furqan (25)

This surah centers around defending the Messenger and the Qur'an after the Mushrikoon had the audacity to attack them.

This is done by demonstrating the truthfulness of His messenger and that the Qur'an has been sent down by Allah while also refuting the criticisms of the disbelievers, minimizing their status, showing the insignificance of what they worship, and then commending the believing servants of al-Rahman and discussing their qualities and rewards.



Surah al-Shu'ara' (26)

This surah is devoted to showing the amazing ways in which Allah has supported the Messengers and destroyed the disbelievers. This serves as a reassurance and fortification for the Prophet.

The surah also serves to refute the slanderous lies and contrived doubts that the disbelievers have made about the Messenger and the Qur'an, and it threatens them that they will have the same ends as the previous nations that were destroyed.

Surah al-Naml (27)

This surah highlights how Allah blessed the Prophet with the Qur'an, which was a blessing exclusive to him. This serves to remind the Prophet to be grateful and to reinvigorate him to be steadfast in conveying the message. It also serves as a threat to those who oppose and deny it.

In the beginning of the surah, Allah says,

وَإِنَّكَ لَتَلَقَّى الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ

And you have certainly received the Qur'an from the All-Wise, All-Knowing [27:6]

and in the end, Allah says,

وَأَنْ أَتْلُو الْقُرْآنَ

And that you recite the Qur'an [27:92]

This surah mentions the story of Moosaa in which Allah singled him out for His Speech, and the story of Sulayman who serves as an example of how Allah blesses His prophets and how they respond to those blessings by praising and thanking their Lord for what He has specially blessed them with.

This is emphasized in the beginning of the surah by saying,

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا
عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

**We certainly gave Dawud and Sulayman knowledge, and
they both said: All praise belongs to Allah Who favored
us above many of His believing slaves [27:15]**

This surah also contains the story of the ant, which is one of many events in which Allah blessed Sulayman in a unique manner by enabling him to understand animal communication. Following from that, Sulayman said:

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ

**My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your blessings
which You have granted to me [27:19]**

Surah al-Qasas (28)

This surah revolves around demonstrating Allah's might and His consistent patterns of supporting the oppressed and destroying the prideful. This serves as both a threat to the disbelievers as well as a promise of aid and empowerment to the Prophet and the oppressed believers.

That is why this surah concludes with,

إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَىٰ مَعَادٍ

**He who mandated the Qur'an for you will surely return
you to a place of return [28:85]**

meaning Makkah.



Surah al-'Ankaboot (29)

The central theme of this surah is the command to be firm and steadfast in times of trials and difficulties while highlighting the good outcomes of doing so.

This comes alongside instructions for the believers to be patient and strive as well as a promise of relief. This is laid in contrast to the true nature of shirk and the end result of those who practice it.

The contents of this surah also include some of events from the lives of the Prophets and how they were saved after going through hardships, as well as mentioning the disbelievers and their final outcomes.

And this surah references a spider web as a way to communicate the weakness of shirk and the lands and people who practice it.

Surah al-Room (30)

This surah is centered around demonstrating that it is Allah alone who controls matters and events and has His established ways of managing the creation.

This is all linked to the fact that He supports those who align themselves with Him and humiliates those who oppose Him. In this vein He said,

لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ
بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ *

The matter is up to Allah, both before and after. And on this day the believers rejoice at Allah's aid [31:4-5]



Surah Luqman (31)

The central theme of this surah is the command to follow the hikmah, which is what Allah has commanded, and showing that His Book is the hikmah which one must follow as it contains guidance and mercy and because anything else is falsehood.

This surah also centers around showing Allah's complete "hikmah" – "wisdom" – in the commands He gives, the signs He shows and the blessings He grants to His creation. All of this should prompt one to learn Allah's Book and be grateful for it, while also warning them against being heedless of it or rejecting it.

This theme is reinforced by the repetition of the words "hikmah" and "Hakeem" four times throughout the surah. And this surah also contains the story of Luqman the Wise and the wise council that Allah enjoined him to give to his son.

Surah al-Sajdah (32)

This surah is centered around showing the reality of man's creation and the various conditions of mankind in both this life and the next. This is done to wake up the hearts and urge them to believe while also warning them against disbelieving.

Surah al-Ahzab (33)

This surah revolves around care and protection of the Prophet and his family members, all the while highlighting His high status, unique qualities and virtues as well as guarding him against people's harms.

It likewise highlights the elevated status of the Prophet's family and the believers due to their tawqā and exemplary faith and how they are far removed from the qualities of pre-Islamic ignorance.

The story of al-Ahzab shows Allah's protection and nurturing care of the Prophet and those who believed alongside him.

This surah also contains a number of ayaat about the unique features of the Prophet, so pay attention to them.

Surah Saba' (34)

This surah is centered around showing how different people respond to blessings and Allah's patterns in altering those blessings.

The surah also focuses on the events of the Resurrection after death, which should prompt one to reflect on how things are always changing from one generation to the next.

This surah includes the stories of Dawud and Saba' as examples of gratitude and ingratitude.

Surah Fatir (35)

This surah revolves around demonstrating the greatness of the Creator by pointing to His creation and how His exquisite craftsmanship points to His tremendous power as well as His creation's tremendous dependency on Him.


All of this should motivate one to magnify and revere Him, believe in Him, and remember His blessings.



Surah Yasin (36)

This surah is focused on affirming the concepts of prophethood and life after death and demonstrating proofs for both of these matters, as well as establishing a proof against those who deny them.

This is all done in the midst of discussing the different ways that messengers interacted with their people.



Surah al-Saffat (37)

This surah centers around clearing Allah – exalted is He – of the accusations that the mushrikoon made about the angels being His daughters.

This is done while also refuting a number of their other false claims about the angels and the claims of them being daughters of Allah, as well as presenting the stories of several of the sincere prophets and the final outcomes of their disbelieving people.



Surah Saad (38)

The theme of this surah is a call to return to the truth, a criticism of false arguments, and the end result of those false arguments. This comes in the midst of criticizing the mushrikoon for their false arguments and their harm against the Prophet, while also threatening them with punishment.

And Allah instructed His Prophet to be steadfast in the face of these challenges and to remember the situations of the previous prophets and how they were steadfast in the face of trials and were constantly turning back to Allah. He also reminds him of the blessings and favor which Allah gave them after all that.

We find the words “al-Awwaab” – “frequently turning back to Allah” – and “al-Khusumaat” – “obstinate arguments” – repeated throughout this surah.

Surah al-Zumar (39)

This surah revolves around calling people to worship Allah alone, to have Ikhlas, and to abandon shirk. This message is delivered while also demonstrating that the central message of this revealed scripture is to single Allah out for worship and to abandon shirk. This is done while presenting Allah's signs which should prompt one to worship Him alone. The surah then concludes by mentioning the reward for the people who worshiped Him alone and the punishment for those who committed shirk.

The word “al-ikhlas” – “sincere and exclusive devotion” – is repeated several times throughout this surah,

فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ

Worship Allah, making the religion purely for Him [39:2]

أَلَا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ

Doesn't pure devotion belong to Allah? [39:3]

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ

Say: I have been commanded worship Allah, making the religion exclusively for Him [39:11]

قُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْبُدْ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي

Say: I worship Allah, making my devotion purely for Him [39:14]

Surah Ghafir (40)

This surah centers around showing the state of those try to argue against Allah's signs and invites them to come back to the truth, offering them a chance at repentance while also prompting them to fear punishment.

This is all done while mentioning a number of factors and signs which should prompt them to believe and cause them to fear disbelieving and rejecting the truth.

This theme is emphasized by the repetition of the word "al-jidal" – being argumentative against Allah's signs.

And this surah also includes the story of the believer from Fir'awn's household which serves as a model for inviting people to believe by way of discussion.

Surah Fussilat (41)

This surah builds off of surah Ghafir in terms of showing the condition of those who reject the Qur'an and calling them to the truth.

This is done while presenting and detailing the signs which demonstrate that the Qur'an is true and also communicating the ultimate ends of the rejectors compared to the believers.

Surah al-Shooraa (42)

This surah is centered around demonstrating that revelation and prophethood are real and showing the complete perfection found in the sharee'ah. This is done while showing that the Qur'an is a continuation of the revelation given to the previous prophets, all of which serves to fortify the Prophet and affirm the reality of his prophethood.

The surah also highlights those who respond to the call of the messengers and their excellent qualities, one of which is making "al-shooraa" – "consultation" – with one another.

Surah al-Zukhruf (43)

This surah revolves around demonstrating the truthful messages of the Qur'an and showing the deficiencies of the fabricated ideas of the pre-Islamic Arabs.

The surah also includes presents a series of proofs for Allah's sole right to be worshiped. Allah's sole right to be worshiped is the enduring statement of faith as professed by Ibrahim and the central message and call of the Messengers in response to the shirk that the Mushrikoon claimed and the partners they attributed to Allah.

Surah al-Dukhan (44)

This surah is centered around warning of an anticipated punishment while simultaneously provoking fear of impending punishment – both in this life and the next – for those who disbelieve in the Qur'an.

The surah also highlights the greatness of the Qur'an and its revelation, as well as mentioning the warnings it contains for the disbelievers on one hand and the good and mercy it promises for the believers on the other.

Surah al-Jathiyah (45)

This surah revolves around addressing those suffering from lowly desires who are too proud to recognize Allah's signs.

This surah also presents the clear signs and reminds them of their ultimate condition in the hereafter.

Surah al-Ahqaf (46)

This surah centers around establishing a proof against the disbelievers, warning them, and clarifying their ultimate end.

Following from this, the word “warning” is repeated throughout the surah, such as Allah’s statements,

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَمَّا أُنذِرُوا مُّعْرِضُونَ

**But those who disbelieve turn away from what they
were warned about [46:3]**

and

وَاذْكُرْ أَخَا عَادٍ إِذْ أُنذَرَ قَوْمَهُ بِالْأَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ النُّذُرُ مِنْ بَيْنِ
يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ

**And remember the brother of ‘Aad when he warned his
people in the sand hills, and other warners have surely
passed away before him [46:21]**



Surah Muhammad (47)

The theme of this surah is encouraging the believers to fight and fortifying them while diminishing the disbelievers and invalidating their deeds. That is why this surah is also called “surah al-Qital” – “the surah of fighting”.



Surah al-Fath (48)

This surah centers around the divine promise of success and victory for the Prophet and the believers who wholeheartedly champion the religion, all of which serves to bring comfort and peace to their hearts.

This all comes after the disbelievers had been preventing them from entering Makkah in response to them having exposed the evil qualities of the disbelievers and munafiqoon.

Surah al-Hujurat (49)

The theme of this surah is nurturing good methods of speech in the believers so as to complete their faith and affirm the ties of Islamic brotherhood.

And it is befitting that this surah was revealed in the year of the delegations when so many were entering Islam, all with their different habits and manners.

Surah Qaaf (50)

This surah is centered around exhorting the people's hearts with reminders of the reality and terrors of death, resurrection and the reckoning.

The surah concludes by saying,

فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ

So remind those who fear a threat with the Qur'an

[50:45]

and the Prophet used to recite it on special occasions as a reminder and exhortation.

Surah al-Dhariyat (51)

This surah is devoted to acquainting the created beings with the Provider who is the only One that deserves to be worshiped. This theme is supported by Allah's statements,

وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ

In the sky is your provision and what you are promised

[51:22]

فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ

So flee to Allah [51:50]

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ * مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ
وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُوا * إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ

And I only created mankind and jinn-kind to worship Me. I do not want provision from them, nor do I want them to feed Me. Allah is the Provider, the Firm Possessor of Strength [51:56-58]

The surah opens by mentioning some factors which bring provision: winds, clouds, ships, angels. It contains the story of Ibrahim serving his angel guests, which points to being grateful to the Provider by serving one's guests. The surah then moves to stories of the nations which were destroyed, which serves as a threat of punishment for those who obstinately reject the truth.



Surah al-Tur (52)

This surah is centered around presenting the proofs and evidence to disprove the doubts of the disbelievers, forcing them to admit and recognize defeat.



Surah al-Najm (53)

This surah revolves around demonstrating that the revelation is true and thereby affirming the belief in Tawheed and that Allah sent the revelation, while also exposing the weakness of belief in shirk.

This theme becomes clear from the surah's praise of knowledge and its highlighting of the guidance and the orientation towards the hereafter that it promotes, as well as its criticism of guess-work theology and personal whims and highlighting the bad outcomes of misguidance, blindness, and attachment to this worldly life.

Surah al-Qamar (54)

This surah is a reminder of the great blessing of the Qur'an having been made easy and of the signs and warnings it contains, while also showing the final destination of those who reject it.

That is why the phrase,

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

We have certainly made the Qur'an easy for remembrance, so are there any who will remember?

[54:17]

is repeated throughout it.

Surah al-Rahman (55)

This surah serves as a reminder of Allah's amazing blessings and of the manifest signs of His mercy in both this life and the next. Allah presents His beautiful signs that can be seen in this world, and the beauty of His Jannah in the hereafter for those who fear Him. All of this serves to encourage belief and to discourage disbelief and ingratitude.

Surah al-Waqi'ah (56)

This surah revolves around affirming the Day of Resurrection and discussing the different categories of people on that Day. This theme is made clear by the surah's name and by the fact that it opens with "al-waqi'ah" – "the event" – as if to say that it is inevitable and unavoidable.

The surah then concludes with Allah's statement,

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ * فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

This is surely a true certainty. So exalt the name of your Lord the Almighty [56:95-96]

and the middle of the surah is devoted to presenting the events of that Day and the conditions of the different categories of people on it.

Surah al-Hadeed (57)

This surah is devoted to motivating people to reach higher levels of eeman and higher levels of spending and support for Allah's cause, while also removing the internal obstacles to those goals.

This is supported by the fact that the word "eeman" in its various forms is repeated 14 times throughout the surah, and the command to spend has been communicated in various forms a number of times through the surah as well.

Furthermore, this theme is also supported by the by the name of this surah, "al-Hadeed" – "Iron" – which points to making preparations for battle and the fact that the mention of this word within the surah is followed up by saying,

وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ

**So that Allah would know who would support Him and
His Messenger despite not seeing Him [57:25]**



Surah al-Mujadalah (58)

This surah is centered around showing Allah's complete knowledge and penetrating awareness, which should inspire people to fear Him and take themselves to task and serve as a warning against disobeying Him. This also affirms Allah's care of the believers and how He will elevate them and how He will foil the plots of the disbelievers and munafiqoon and humiliate them.

All of this is supported by the fact that the name "Allah" is mentioned in every single ayah of this surah, which should cause listeners to remember Him, fear Him and revere Him.

This surah also includes the story of "al-Mujadilah" – "the woman who complained" – which points to Allah's inescapable knowledge of His slaves in all circumstances. It was in this vein that 'A'ishah said, "**Exalted is He whose hearing hears all voices,**" which is an authentic report found in Sunan al-Nasa'i #3460.



Surah al-Hashr (59)

This surah is dedicated to showing Allah's power and might in supporting the believers and weakening the disbelievers and munafiqoon and exposing how lowly and divided they are. In contrast, Allah also shows how strong and united the believers are. All of this serves to fortify the hearts of the believers and to demoralize the disbelievers and munafiqoon.

The surah concludes with a number of ayaat centered around Allah's Names, which prompts the listener to exalt Allah and recognize His power.



Surah al-Mumtahinah (60)

This surah revolves around warning the believers against taking the disbelievers as allies and also includes a command to follow the example of Ibrahim in disassociating himself from the disbelievers.

Surah al-Saff (61)

This surah centers around urging the believers to support Allah's true religion. This comes in the beginning in His statement,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِهِ صَفًّا

Allah loves those who fight for His cause lined up [61:4]

and at the end in His statement,

كُونُوا أَنْصَارَ اللَّهِ

Be supporters of Allah [61:14]



Surah al-Jumu'ah (62)



This surah is centered around how Allah has blessed this nation and favored them by sending the Messenger. This carries with it the obligation to obey him and unite behind him. It also carries a warning against opposing him and being like the Ahl al-Kitab who fell short in fulfilling their religious responsibilities and opposed their messengers.

This surah also focuses on the blessing that this nation was given in the day of Jumu'ah and in praying on it. This is something that distinguishes this nation, for it leads to them being united and coming together in lines and ranks just as surah al-Saff before this pointed to.

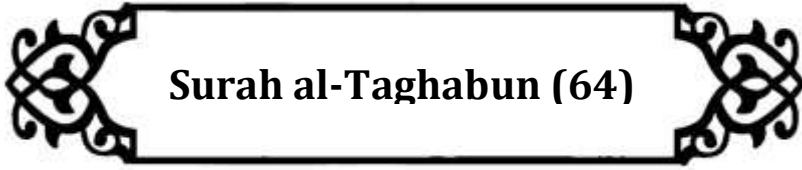


Surah al-Munafiqoon (63)



This surah is centered around revealing the truth about the munafiqoon, describing their features, and warning against their actions.

The first half focuses on unveiling their true natures and their evil qualities, while the second half focuses on warning against being like them in how they let amassing wealth and children preoccupy them from remembering Allah and in how little they spend for Allah's cause.



Surah al-Taghabun (64)

This surah is devoted to warning against being in a state of deprivation of the Day of Resurrection. This is communicated by highlighting the enormity of the sin of disbelieving in the Lord of all creation and clearly demonstrating the disbelievers' deprivation and final recompense.

This is done as a deterrent and warning against disbelief and the disbelievers.

It also serves to prompt the believers to prepare both spiritually and physically for whatever lies ahead of them, a point which is supported by the fact that this is a Madani surah.

Surah al-Talaq (65)

This surah revolves around stressing the magnitude of divorce and its legal rulings, while also emphasizing and stressing the outcomes of respecting Allah's limits vs transgressing them.

The surah concludes with a warning of a punishment for those who opposes Allah's commands and guidance, a reminder of Allah having sent the Messenger with clear guidance, and an emphasis on the greatness of Allah's commandments and revelation.

Surah al-Tahreem (66)

This surah centers around cultivating a believing household to respect Allah's legal rulings, prioritize His pleasure, and avoid opposing Him.

The surah includes a story of the Prophet's household which serves as a model and an encouragement to create believing families and an Islamic society.



Surah al-Mulk (67)

This surah is devoted to demonstrating Allah's complete ownership and power, which should prompt one to magnify and revere Him. This also serves to deter one against opposing Him and warn of His punishment.

For these reasons, it is encouraged to recite this surah every night.



Surah al-Qalam (68)

This surah revolves around praising the Prophet for his excellent character and criticizing the disbelievers for their sinful character. This is done to defend and support the Prophet as well as to communicate a threat to those prideful and sinful disbelievers.

This surah also includes the story of the owners of the garden and their poor behaviors, their stinginess, and how they repented after their punishment. This contains a warning of worldly punishment for the disbelievers, as well as an encouragement for them to repent.

Surah al-Qalam (69)

This surah centers around affirming the inevitable Day of Resurrection. This in turn affirms the truthfulness of the Qur'an, offers as a strong warning to the disbelievers that they will be punished, and promises the believers that they will experience great joy.

This theme is emphasized by the fact that the surah both begins and ends with forms of the word "al-haqq",

الْحَاقَّةُ * مَا الْحَاقَّةُ * وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحَاقَّةُ

**The inevitable reality. What is the inevitable reality?
And what will let you know what the inevitable reality
is? [69:1-3]**

And,

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ * فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

**It is the certain truth. So extol the name of your Lord, the
Magnificent [69:51-52]**

Surah al-Ma'arij (70)

This surah is focused around affirming the punishment for the disbelievers and the pleasures for the believers that will occur on the Day of Recompense. This serves as a complement and completion to surah al-Haqqah's focus on the inevitable nature of the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Ma'arij highlights the disbelievers' lowly inner state in both this life and the next, in contrast to how surah al-Haqqah highlights the tremendous awe-inspiring nature of the Resurrection. This is supported by the fact that Allah begins surah al-Haqqah by saying,

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ وَعَادٌ بِالْقَارِعَةِ

Thamud and 'Aad denied the Striking [69:4]

while He began surah al-Ma'arij by saying,

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ

A questioner asks about the inevitable punishment

[70:1]

So Allah explicitly mentions the Striking of the Day of Resurrection in surah al-Haqqah, while explicitly mentioning the punishment in surah al-Ma'arij.

Surah Nuh (71)

This surah is centered around the steadfast patience of those who invite others to Islam and their efforts in doing so. This theme is communicated by presenting the firm resolve of Nuh and the extreme obstinacy and stubbornness of his people and their resulting bad outcome. This all serves as an affirmation for the Prophet and the believers and as a warning for the disbelievers.

Surah al-Jinn (72)

This surah is dedicated to commending the Jinn for having believed and criticizing the mushrikoon for turning away, while also showing the futility and falseness of their practice of directing certain acts of worship towards the Jinn.



Surah al-Muzzammil (73)

The central thrust of this surah is presenting the means which aid one in fulfilling the heavy burdens of inviting others to Islam. These include praying the optional night prayers which are a form of spiritual nourishment for calling people to Islam in the face of difficulties and trials.

This surah also serves as a consolation and fortification for the Prophet, and as a warning for those who reject his role as a prophet.

Surah al-Muddathir (74)

This surah is centered around 1) the command to call others to Islam and warn them, 2) the certain promise of divine aid against the mockery and rejection of the disbelievers, and 3) clearly explaining the punishments for those disbelievers.

All of this functions as a complement to the factors which aid one in calling to Islam that were mentioned in surah al-Muzzammil, which is why Allah said,

قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ

Stand and warn [74:2]

here and,

قُمِ اللَّيْلَ

stand the night in prayer [73:2]

there.

These two surahs are connected. The first is a fortification of the Prophet while the second is directed against the disbelievers and providing guidance for the believers. Perhaps this is because the first was revealed at the beginning of the call to Islam while the second was revealed later.

Surah al-Qiyamah (75)

This surah is dedicated to demonstrating Allah's power to bring the created beings back to life after their deaths and to gather them together. This serves to disprove the disbeliever's rejection of the ideas the resurrection and final judgement.

The surah also reassures the Prophet and further encourages him in gathering the Qur'an together in his memory while Allah promises to explain it. This theme is strongly indicated by the repetition of the word "al-jam'a" – "to bring together" – in its various forms throughout this surah,

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَلَّن نَّجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ

Does he think We will never gather his bones back together? [75:3]

وَجْمَعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ

And the sun and the moon are brought together [75:9]

إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ

It is Our responsibility to bring it together and compile it [75:17]

This surah also contains a message specifically for the Prophet, which is to inform him that his responsibility is to convey the Qur'an and that Allah has taken on the responsibility of preserving the Qur'an, bringing it all together in the Prophet's memory, and making its meanings clear to him.



Surah al-Insan (76)

This surah centers around reminding man of his origins, the reason why he was created, and that he will ultimately end up in one of two places.

This surah also focuses on communicating the amazing pleasures of Jannah that its inhabitants will enjoy.

All of this is a consolation and affirmation for the Prophet and the believers, as well as an incentive for the disbelievers to believe.

Surah al-Mursalat (77)

The theme of this surah is an announcement of misery for those who deny the final judgment. This theme comes in the midst of arguments and proofs against the disbelievers, presenting them with threats and warnings, and refuting their arguments for disbelieving in the Qur'an even after its message has become clear to them.

فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ

So which speech will they believe in after this?! [77:50]

Surah al-Naba' (78)

This surah is centered around affirming the Qur'an's news about the resurrection and recompense of the dead by providing proofs and evidence. This is a rebuttal against those who deny them and serves as a threat against those deniers, while simultaneously offering consolation and a promise of reward for the believers.

Surah al-Nazi'at (79)

This surah revolves around the events of death, resurrection, the Day of Judgement, striking fear into those wicked deniers and acting as a reminder for the believers. In this vein, the surah mentions,

قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ * أَبْصَارُهَا خَاشِعَةٌ

That day, hearts will tremble. Their eyes will be humbled [79:8-9]

Surah 'Abasa (80)

The core theme of this surah is the call of the Qur'an, what a blessing the Qur'an is, its high status, who deserves to benefit and be purified by it, how those who turn away and find no value it will be humiliated, and the final outcome for them in the hereafter.

Surah al-Takwir (81)

This surah is devoted to reminding people of the events of the Day of Resurrection. This serves to affirm the truthfulness of the revelation and to strike fear into those who do not believe in it.

فَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُونَ * إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

**So where are you going? It is only a reminder for all
creation [81:26-27]**

The theme of this surah and the following surahs are made clear by what al-Tirmidhi reported that ibn ‘Umar narrated that the Prophet said, “**Whoever would like to see the Day of Resurrection as if he were looking at it, let him read surah al-Takwir, surah al-Infitar, and surah al-Inshiqaq.**”



Surah al-Infitar (82)

This surah revolves around presenting the events of the Day of Resurrection which should strike fear into the hearts of those who deny the Day of Recompense.



Surah al-Mutaffifeen (83)

This surah centers around people's conditions when it comes to the scales of measurement and their ranks in the hereafter. This serves to warn those who falsely tip the measuring scales when doing business and who deny the resurrection and mock the believers and to inform them of their low position in the hereafter. It also serves to comfort the oppressed Muslims and to inform them of their elevated ranks in the hereafter.

There is a clear connection between surah al-Mutaffifeen and surah al-Infitar as both surahs mention the conditions of the righteous ones compared to the wicked ones. However, each surah has its own distinct angle, for surah al-Infitar revolves around their respective deeds while surah al-Mutaffifeen revolves around their scales of measurement and their ranks. And Allah knows best.



Surah al-Inshiqaq (84)

This surah is dedicated to painting an image of the Day of Resurrection on which the entire creation will submit and humble themselves to the command of its Lord, which should motivate man to submit in this life.


This surah also serves to expose the wrongness of denying the Resurrection and refusing to obey as well as to warn man of a punishment on the Day of Reckoning. It also brings comfort to those believers who have submitted and humbled themselves to their Lord that they will have an everlasting reward.

And this surah acts as a completion of the themes of surah al-Takwir and surah al-Infitar.



Surah al-Burooj (85)

This surah is dedicated to showing Allah's great power and complete authority and to send a threat of severe punishment to those who wrong the believers. This is an admonishment to those who reject the message of Islam, and a consolation and fortification for the believers.



Surah al-Tariq (86)

This surah is centered around showing Allah's incredible power in creating man, watching over him, and bringing him back to life after death. This serves as a warning to the deceitful disbelievers and an affirmation for the believers.

Surah al-A'laa (87)

This surah revolves around reminding people of Allah the Most High's great favors, attaching their hearts to the life of the hereafter, and cleansing them of attachment to this worldly life. This message is especially poignant in His statement,

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَى

So remind, if the reminder benefits [87:9]

until the end of the surah.



Surah al-Ghashiyah (88)

This surah is dedicated to reminders of scenes of both punishment and pleasure, and it draws attention to proofs of the amazing power of the Lord of all creation and the evidence for that power which can be seen in the signs around us. These signs should fill the soul with both fear and longing, as is found in Allah's statement,

فَذَكِّرْ إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُذَكِّرٌ

So remind; you are only one who reminds [88:21]

until the end of the surah.

This surah is a complementary partner to surah al-A'laa, for surah al-A'laa is focused on positive motivation and the souls being attached to Allah while surah al-Ghashiyah is focused on fear-based motivation and prompting the souls to fear Allah's punishment and reckoning. And the names of these two surahs also point to these respective primary themes.

Surah al-Fajr (89)

This surah highlights the amazing scenes and Allah's incredible power over the creation.

This surah also presents the various conditions of mankind, which serves as a warning to the deluded disbelievers and as a consolation to the contented believers.

That is because it prompts awe and fear in disbelieving souls while communicating a message of approval and pleasure to the hearts of the believers.

Surah al-Balad (90)

This surah proclaims that man is in the hardship of disbelief and punishment and invites him to climb the ladder of mercy and faith in both this life and the next.

The surah also warns the mushrikoon living in the sacred city of Makkah and acts as a consolation to the Prophet in terms of how his Lord has honored him and given him special allowance regarding His sacred House.



Surah al-Shams (91)

This surah is focused on presenting Allah's clear signs and blessings. This should prompt one to purify his soul with faith and gratitude and cleanse it of disbelief and ingratitude. It also serves to warn of the negative outcomes of disbelief and disobedience.



Surah al-Layl (92)

This surah centers around showing the different conditions of people and their varying levels of faith and charitable spending and the status of each group of people. This serves to announce the good reward for those believers who give and how their situation will be made easy, and to announce the bad outcome of those obstinate disbelievers and how their situation will be made difficult.



Surah al-Dhuhaa (93)



This surah revolves around Allah's great care for His Prophet and how He blessed him by sending the revelation and making it an ongoing revelation, all of which serves as a reminder for him to be grateful. The surah also acts as a response to the mushrikoon who mocked the Prophet.

This surah also contains a reminder for any believer of the blessings that Allah has given him and how those blessings should prompt him to be completely grateful.



Surah al-Sharh (94)



The theme of this surah is how Allah blessed His Prophet in the most complete way by removing gloom, worry, and difficulty from him, as well as removing the factors which cause those things. This surah was sent after surah al-Dhuhaa as a complement to it.

Surah al-Teen (95)


This surah declares that Allah, out of His wisdom, has honored mankind by creating him to receive revelation. This serves as a reprimand for those who reject His religion and informs them of their lowered rank.

This surah contains an oath by the fig, the olive, Mount Sinai, and the inviolable sanctuary since these are the lands in which revelation was sent down.

And it concludes with Allah saying,

فَمَا يُكَذِّبُكَ بَعْدُ بِالدِّينِ

So what still causes you to reject the religion? [95:7]



Surah al-'Alaq (96)

This surah demonstrates that man's completeness comes through knowledge and through Allah's revelation which prompts him to attach and humble himself to his Lord, while man's shortcomings are a result of his arrogance and opposition to his Lord.

It also presents the greatest of models for knowledge in the form of the Prophet, and the greatest of models for ignorance in the form of Abu Jahl. This serves to honor and highlight the virtue of the Prophet and those who follow him in Islam, as well as to belittle and show the foolishness of Abu Jahl and those who follow him in shirk.



Surah al-Qadr (97)

This surah revolves around showing the significance and virtue of Laylah al-Qadr and that revelation was sent down on it, all of which in turn shows the greatness of the Qur'an and its status.

Surah al-Bayyinah (98)

This surah is dedicated to showing the perfection of the message of Muhammad and showing its essence, its clarity, how people responded to it and their respective rewards.

Surah al-Zalzalah (99)

This surah is centered around mentioning the terrifying events of the Day of Resurrection and the precise nature of Reckoning that will take place on it. This is done to encourage one to do good deeds and discourage one from doing evil acts.

Surah al-'Adiyat (100)

This surah centers on warning man against being ungrateful, reminding him of what Allah has subjugated for him, and moving him to have fear of the hereafter.

Allah swore by the horses and their mighty speed in the role that Allah created them for, which is jihaad. This acts as a reprimand against man and a reminder of what he was created for. All of this highlights the value of being successful which can be taken from the traits of the horse, especially when compared to the traits of a human who knows that the purpose of his existence is to rush forward in obedience to Allah, to hold tight to His religion, to hasten towards good at the first opportunity, all of which has a blessed impact and positive effect on human society.


Surah al-Qari'ah (101)

This surah is focused on knocking the hearts into awareness of the terrors of the Day of Resurrection. It also mentions the different conditions of people and their scales of deeds on that Day.



Surah al-Takathur (102)

This surah centers around reminding those people who seek to hoard up possessions in this worldly life of death and the reckoning, which is why this surah is also called “the surah of merchants.”



Surah al-‘Asr (103)

This surah is dedicated to the reality of success and loss in life and the factors which lead to being saved.



Surah al-Humazah (104)

This surah revolves around the threat for those people who mock the believers and believe themselves to be better than them.



Surah al-Feel (105)



This surah centers around Allah's protection of His sacred House. This serves to remind the Prophet and the believers of this blessing while also threatening the mushrikoon.



Surah Quraysh (106)



This surah centers around reminding the people of the sacred mosque of Allah's blessings to them which should compel them to worship Allah and be grateful to Him.



Surah al-Ma'oon (107)



This surah offers a clear description of those who deny the final recompense and the hereafter. It serves as a warning to the believers and a criticism of the disbelievers and munafiqoon.



Surah al-Kawthar (108)



This surah centers around delivering news of a great blessing to the Prophet, which is an abundant amount of good, as well as defending him and consoling him. This all acts to fortify him and prompt him to be grateful, while also serving as a rebuttal and threat against those who would disparage him.



Surah al-Kafiroon (109)



This surah is centered around a disavowal of shirk and the people who practice it and drawing a clear distinction between Islam and shirk.

Surah al-Nasr (110)

The focus of this surah is giving the Prophet the glad tidings of victory, the conclusion of his role as Messenger, and what to do when a blessing has been given in full.

This surah indicated to the Prophet that his role was coming to an end and that the end of his life was drawing near and how to spend his remaining lifespan.

For this reason, this surah is also known as “the farewell surah.”

Surah al-Masad (111)

This surah is focused on showing the state of loss that even people of high lineage and social status will experience if they disbelieve in Allah and fight against His religion.

This is especially true for the first person to openly declare his opposition – both to the message and to the Messenger – that person being the Prophet’s uncle Abu Lahab.

This also serves to reinforce and support the Prophet.

Surah al-Ikhlas (112)

This surah centers around affirming Allah's complete and exclusive perfection and declaring Him free from having any son or equal. This should compel each person to make his devotion exclusively for Allah, making Allah his only aim and directing all worship exclusively to Him.

Surah al-Falaq (113)

This surah centers around seeking refuge and protection with Allah from visible evils.

Surah al-Nas (114)

This surah centers around seeking protection and refuge with Allah from the shaytaan's evils and temptations and from hidden evils.

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Knowing the themes of each surah is one of most important tools for understanding, contemplating and fully benefiting from the guidance & lessons of Allah's Book. As al-Shatibi said, **"Tadabbur can only occur when one pays attention to the themes."**

Allah, out of His grace, enabled me to dedicate myself to extracting the themes of each surah, a process of both contemplation and exploring roughly a dozen sources which I poured myself into.

The original motive for writing this work was that the brothers at Markaz Tafsir requested some themes to include in the book al-Mukhtasar fi al-Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Karim. These themes were included — alhamdulillah — after being reviewed by a number of specialists and were printed in the 5th edition.

This effort which I undertook of extracting the themes of each surah is one of scholarly reasoning, so whatever is correct is from Allah alone, and whatever is incorrect is from myself and from the shaytaan — may Allah forgive me.

Later, Allah enabled Dr. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Nasir to adapt these themes into poem form which ustadh Dhafar al-Natifat then recorded, may Allah reward them both. I then wrote a short explanation of these themes to be attached to that poem.

-Dr Muhammad al-Rabee'ah

Professor, University of al-Qassim